

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1891

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB PNCT AG
SUBJECT: RAILWAY AND PORT STRIKES

REF: ALGIERS 1854

1. FOLLOWING BRIEF RAIGGAY STRIKE (REFTEL) ALGERIAN DOCK WORKERS STOPPED WORK FOR SHORT TIME EARLIER THIS WEEK. WELL INFORMED FOREIGN JOURNALIST WHO VISITED PORT JULY 25 SAYS THAT THERE WAS NO ACTIVITY THERE THAT DAY. BY JULY 27, DOCKERS HAD GONE BACK TO WORK, BUT JOURNALIST SAYS THAT SLOWDOWN STRIKE WAS IN EFFECT BOTH ON DOCKS AND RAILWAYS. ACCORDING TO JOURNALIST, ARMY ORDERED RAILWAY WORKERS BACK TO WORK, AND SLOWDOWN IS IN PROTEST OF THIS ACTION. AT MOMENT, BOTH RAILWAYS AND DOCKS APPEAR TO CASUAL OBSERVER TO BE FUNCTIONING NORMALLY, AND NUMBER OF SHIPS WAITING TURN AT PIERS HAS DECLINED IN PAST 48 HOURS.

2. UNDERLYING CAUSE OF STRIKES, JOURNALIST BELIEVES, IS FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT'S STUDY OF SALARIES QUESTION TO PRODUCE CONCRETE RESULTS. FOLLOWING COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' REVIEW OF ISSUE, WORKERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THAT NO FURTHER ACTION
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WILL BE TAKEN ACTIL AFTER END OF RAMADHAM FAST IN MID-SEPTEMBER. THIS DELAY APPARENTLY APPLIES TO WAGE INCREASES WHICH DOCK WORKERS REPORTEDLY WON FOLLOWING THEIR STRIKE EARLIER IN YEAR. SINCE WORKERS, LIKE OTHER ALGERIANS, ARE SAID TO HAVE ASSUMED THAT STUDY OF SALARIES QUESTION WOULD LEAD TO LARGE, ACROSS THE BOWKD WAGE INCREASES, DISAPPOINTMENT AT SEEMING STALL

HAS BEEN KEEN, AND JOURNALIST BELIEVES THAT NUMBER OF STRIKES IN OTHER STATE ENTERPRISES HAS BEEN LARGE.

3. COMMENT: FOREGOING SITUATION DOES NOT SEEM TO BE GIVING REGIME GREAT CONCERN. PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE UNDERTOOK HIS EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN MEDIATION EFFORT AT A TIME WHEN LABOR DIFFICULTIES APPARENTLY SEVERE, AND AT MOMENT IS OCCUPIED WITH TWO-DAY VISIT BY CAMEROUN PRESIDENT AHIDJO. NEVERTHELESS, EXPECTATIONS OF WAGE INCREASES ARE WIDESPREAD, AND CONTINUED FAILURE ON GOVERNMENT'S PART TO DELIVER GOODS COULD PRODUCE FURTHER TROUBLE. DUNBAR

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Message Attributes

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